

# ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**July 11, 2003**

For immediate release

1. **Beaches posted Beeds Lake, Backbone Lake and Rock Creek Lake; Re-testing being done at Marble Beach**
2. **DNR to begin routine beach testing at North Twin Lake and Lacey-Keosauqua next week**
3. **Confinement concrete standards and air quality on July 21 EPC agenda**
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## **BEACHES POSTED AT BEEDS LAKE, BACKBONE LAKE AND ROCK CREEK LAKE; RE-TESTING BEING DONE AT MARBLE BEACH**

DES MOINES — Swimming advisories have been posted at Beeds Lake in Franklin County, Rock Creek Lake in Jasper County and Backbone Lake in Delaware County. In addition, Marble Beach at Sprit Lake in Dickinson County will be re-sampled with results expected back next week.

The beach at Beeds Lake had an E. coli bacteria reading of 2,700 which exceeds the standard for a one-time sample result of 235. Backbone Lake had an E. coli bacteria reading of 570. Rock Creek Lake had an E.coli count of 550. All three of these beaches are on the list of eight lakes in Iowa that have had a history of high bacteria levels in the past, so a warning sign is posted immediately.

Because of its geometric mean – at least five samples taken over a 30 day period – Rock Creek Lake will have an advisory posted for at least two weeks.

Marble Beach has not had a history of bacteria problems in previous years of monitoring. It has been re-tested and if the levels continue to be high, it will be posted with a warning sign next week.

Bacteria levels at beaches typically rise as a result of runoff from rainfall and can return to normal in less than two days with sunny conditions. Samples are collected from the

beaches on Monday and Tuesday. There was widespread rain over much of Iowa in the last week likely elevating bacteria levels at some locations.

Bacteria levels at Iowa's 30 other state park beaches are within acceptable levels.

The DNR is also advising normal precautions for contact with any surface water in Iowa:

- Avoid swallowing the water
- Avoid the water if you have open cuts or wounds that could become infected by contact with bacteria
- Swimming is not recommended for persons who are very young or very old and may have problems avoiding ingestion of water, and people who have weakened immune systems due to other medical conditions.

Weekly beach monitoring results are posted on the DNR's website every Friday afternoon at <http://www.iowadnr.com/news/beach.html>

**For more information, contact Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395 or Mary Skopec, 319-335-1575.**

## **DNR TO BEGIN ROUTINE BEACH MONITORING AT NORTH TWIN LAKE AND LACEY KEOSAQUAH NEXT WEEK**

DES MOINES — Weekly beach monitoring will start next week at two additional state parks.

North Twin Lake in Calhoun County has not been part of the weekly beach monitoring in the past, but will now be part of the routine weekly schedule during the swimming season. The lake at Lacey-Keosauqua in Van Buren County had a dam failure in May of 2002. The dam has been repaired and the lake has re-filled for use.

A sewage leak at North Twin Lake over the Fourth of July holiday weekend apparently elevated bacteria levels at the state park area on the west end of the lake known as Sandy Point. Results from the last water monitoring done at North Twin had E.coli results of 320 at Sandy Point and 90 at the state park area on the east end of the lake was 90. The water quality standard for water used for swimming is 235.

The DNR is still recommending that people avoid the water near Sandy Point.

“Our monitoring shows a strong indication that bacteria levels at the state park area on the west end was caused by the sewer break over the Fourth of July. Unfortunately, we have had so much rain since then it is hard to tell whether the sewage spill is still an impact. Bacteria levels often go up after runoff from rainfall, said Barb Lynch, bureau chief of field services and compliance for the DNR.

Lynch said a Clorox mixture will be sprayed on the on the grassy area that the wastewater originally pooled and on the pathway the water would normally take to the lake at the

state park area on the west end. This is being done as a precautionary measure to kill off any pathogens possibly remaining since the sewage spill.

**For more information, contact Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395.**

## **CONFINEMENT CONCRETE STANDARDS AND AIR QUALITY ON JULY 21 EPC AGENDA**

DES MOINES — Commissioners will be asked to decide on a rule proposal to update concrete standards for confinement feeding operations at the July 21 meeting of the Environmental Protection Commission.

“The new concrete standards were developed in response to the livestock legislation passed last year,” said Reza Khosravi, acting supervisor of the DNR’s animal feeding operations.

The new standards call for rebar and other reinforcements, and a level subgrade and drainage tile underneath concrete manure storage pits. Khosravi said that these structures can be under considerable pressure from ground water or soil, or from the liquids being held inside the pit.

Two petitions regarding air quality around confinements are also on the agenda as information items.

The EPC meeting will be held at 10 a.m., at the DNR office, 7900 Hickman Road in Urbandale. Public participation is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. The meeting is open to the public.

The complete agenda is as follows:

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes
- Director’s Remarks
- Contract – City of Des Moines - Iowa UST fields Project
- Contract – University of Northern Iowa - Organophosphorus Insecticide Contamination in Streams: Insects as Bioindicators
- Contract - Amend contract 00-93HA-06 with Iowa State University
- Notice of Intended Action--Amend IAC Chapter 567-117 “Waste Tire Management”
- Proposed Rules - Drinking Water, Operator Certification and Laboratory Certification Programs - Chapters 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 81, and 83
- Proposed Rule: Chapter 61, Water Quality Standards
- Final Rule- Chapter 22, Controlling Pollution (Air Construction Permitting Exemptions)
- Petition for Rulemaking by Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

- Extension on Petition for Rulemaking from Agribusiness Association of Iowa, et al.
- Notice of Intended Action - Amend IAC Chapter 65 Animal Feeding Operations
- Referrals to the Attorney General
  - a) Dana Schlag, Plantation Village Mobile Home Park (Burlington) – drinking water/penalty
  - b) Mike Messerschmidt (Martinsburg) – air quality/penalty
  - c) Carl Simon (Dubuque County) – animal feeding operation/penalty
  - d) Lawrence Handlos (Audubon County) – animal feeding operation
- Proposed Contested Case Decision – Piper Motor Company, Inc. and Bruce Piper
- Proposed Contested Case Decision – Iowa Select Farms, L.P
- Monthly Reports
- General Discussion

The members of the commission are Kathryn Murphy, Chair, LeMars; Terrance Townsend, Newton; Lisa Davis-Cook, West Des Moines; Darrell Hanson, Manchester; Lori Glanzman, Mt. Pleasant; Jerry Peckum, Jefferson; Heidi Vittetoe, Washington; Francis Thicke, Fairfield; and Donna Buell, Spirit Lake. The director of the DNR is Jeff Vonk.

**For more information, contact Karen Grimes, at (515) 281-5135.**

## **VACATIONING IOWANS CAN AVOID LUNG BURN**

DES MOINES — Most summer vacationers know to slap on sunscreen to avoid sunburn, but avoiding lung burn is another matter.

The summertime family vacation may take Iowa travelers to areas where exposure to high levels of lung searing smog is common, but new resources can help vacationers protect themselves with air quality conditions listed for 275 cities, national parks and states.

“Even visits to U.S. National Parks and areas far removed from large cities can expose vacationers to some of the highest smog levels in the nation—even higher than that in large cities,” said DNR air information specialist Brian Button. “That’s because pollutants can travel great distances from where they are emitted. A trip to a rural Maine beach, the western deserts, mountainous areas, or fishing off the Atlantic coast can expose you to high smog levels on some days.”

“Travelers can log on to the Internet to see up-to-date, hourly maps of smog levels across much of the nation with predictions for the next day’s pollution too,” he said. Often lodges, campgrounds and resorts in highly polluted areas post current air quality conditions, known as the AQI, or Air Quality Index, a nationally used color coded system that reflects the health precautions associated with pollution levels. Many newspapers and television stations also carry the information.

On high pollution days, limiting strenuous outdoor activities—long hikes, bike rides or running—is advised. Such activities increase the amount of air—and pollution—inhaled. “That can be tough, especially when in areas where you want to be active, like beaches, trails and parks, but you may be better off postponing the activity until cleaner air returns using pollution forecasts as a guide.”

He said paying attention to air quality is especially important for children, who breathe more air per pound of body weight than do adults and whose lungs are developing. Active adults are also at risk.

“There is overwhelming medical evidence that exposure to ozone smog has both short and long term effects. Smog is a known trigger of asthmatic attacks, can reduce lung function, cause rapid and shallow breathing, discomfort, and similar to a sunburn, can burn the linings of the lungs. Repeat exposure can cause permanent changes in lung tissue among other health concerns,” he said.

Button said the best web site is [www.epa.gov/airnow](http://www.epa.gov/airnow), but [theweatherchannel.com](http://theweatherchannel.com) and [iowacleanair.com](http://iowacleanair.com) have similar information.

“Usually activities in the early morning and evenings experience the least amount of ozone smog, which forms after sunlight and warm temperatures “cook” fumes, vapors and gases from vehicles, factories, refineries and other pollution sources.

**For more information, contact Brian Button at (515) 281-7832.**